

**ANALYZING THE IMPACTS OF RESERVATION POLICY ON
DALITS IN INDIA FROM RAWLS' PERSPECTIVE OF JUSTICE**

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M.A. (HUMAN RIGHTS)

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SURAT HORACHAIKUL**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to examine the impacts of the reservation policy on Dalits in India through Rawls' perspectives of justice, in particular focusing on their right to work and education in Bihar State.

The research reveals that the reservation policy on Dalits in India has not created equal opportunity for the least advantaged groups among Dalits to exercise their rights to work and education. State policies and their implementation have not properly addressed the deep-rooted socio-cultural and economic discriminations and the mind set of the people. Even the laws related to the affirmative actions for Dalits do not seem to be guided by Rawls' twin principle of justice – “equal distribution of liberty” and “the maximum benefits of the unequal distribution for the least advantaged groups”.

The reservation policy also fails to create equal opportunities for the least advantaged groups among Dalits to exercise their rights to education and work. Even though the policy envisages reserving a quota for Dalits and disadvantaged people, the prevalent caste-based discrimination in education and employment sector is the major barrier to ensure justice. There is less concern on the issues of re-distribution of land, arrangement of minimum wage to the level of basic needs and dignity for the labourers at the work places. Without considering these elements, the enjoyment of justice to meet the level of Rawls' perspective is not met.

The current policy seems ineffective for the marginalized and disadvantaged groups among Dalits to fight against discrimination and exploitation in achieving the level of justice through empowerment, liberty, primary goods, and gender mainstreaming and protective measures.

Without addressing the cultural and structural hierarchy, it is difficult to ensure liberty which is the main principle of Rawls' justice for the Dalit castes. These findings also suggest that the reservation policy should be implemented in a way that could meet the level of two principle of Rawls' justice.

**KEY WORDS: RESERVATION POLICY / JOHN RAWLS / JUSTICE /
IMPACTS / DALITS / EMPOWERMENT**